

When I became chief of staff to Gov. Mark Dayton in 2010, Dave quickly called me up to offer his advice and support, with his characteristic understatement and dry sense of humor.

In Minnesota, Senator Durenberger was respected as a volunteer, a thinker, a doer. He was always ready to pitch in and help with a wide array of organizations that he saw were doing good work, from those dedicated to environmental protection to conservation, to children's health.

In the Senate, Dave built a reputation as a powerful advocate and expert on healthcare reform. He was instrumental in passing the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, which recognized the civil rights of people living with disabilities, and he was an effective leader on legislation to protect our air and water, to clean up Superfund sites, and to protect public lands so that all of our children and grandchildren could enjoy them forever.

After he left the Senate, he continued to advocate for the things that he cared about, from improving healthcare to protecting the environment. He became one of the Nation's leading health policy experts at the University of St. Thomas and helped to mentor the next generation of health policy leaders.

When I came to the Senate and won a seat on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, a committee that Dave also served on, he immediately reached out to me to offer support and ideas. Every year, he organized a group of young healthcare leaders, through the Health Policy Center at St. Thomas, to come to Washington, and I always made time to sit down and talk with them. It was so great to see how Senator Durenberger continued to instill in these policy fellows the mission of diving in beneath the headlines to figure out exactly what would help to make healthcare more accessible and affordable for everyone.

When Dave was elected to the Senate, he was an Independent Republican, as the Minnesota State party was then called. He later dropped the Republican part and was a proud Independent—always willing to work with both Democrats and Republicans to solve problems. He was an outspoken critic of President Trump, and he lamented the extremism in the Republican Party today. Dave always stood for bipartisanship, pragmatism, and politics that was about improving people's lives. He proudly called himself a progressive Republican. I love that.

If I had to name one thing that characterized Senator Dave Durenberger, it would be his determination to find solutions to the problems that hold people back in their lives, especially problems with healthcare. He didn't care whether an idea came from Republicans or Democrats. He just cared about what was going to make a difference.

As I reflect on his life and his time in the Senate, I am reminded that his

Midwestern brand of bipartisan, commonsense, pragmatic politics still lives on in the Senate today. Beneath the headlines and the division and extremism, many of us on both sides of the aisle still carry on his legacy by working together to try to find common ground and solve problems.

Today, as we mourn the loss of Senator Durenberger, let us take inspiration from his example of thoughtful, pragmatic, and results-oriented politics. May his memory be a blessing.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it was a busy weekend for the U.S. military, which has now shot down three unidentified objects over North American airspace in as many days.

On Friday, an F-22 took down an object hovering over Alaska, which officials described as being about the size of a small car. On Saturday, an F-22 brought down an object over Canada that was described only as cylindrical. On Sunday, an F-16 shot down another unidentified object over Lake Huron, which was traveling at about 20,000 feet—low enough to interfere with commercial air traffic.

Given the high profile of the Chinese spy balloon, this is, obviously, of great interest to the American people.

Over the last several days, starting in late February, the American people watched as China's surveillance balloon traveled across the country before President Biden finally instructed the military to shoot it down off the coast of South Carolina. That was just 9 days ago. The military is still recovering pieces of that balloon from the bottom of the Atlantic in an effort to gain some answers, but given everything that has happened in the interim, the swirl of questions has only grown.

The United States has shot down four objects flying over our country since February 4, and they have identified one of those four objects. Based on what we know now or perhaps what we don't know now, we know the government has shot down three objects of unknown provenance. Since they don't know what they are, presumably, they don't know where they came from; yet the President ordered them shot down. We have not been told whether they were emitting any sort of signature, like heat, which might be picked up by an infrared sensor, or some other signal, with data either coming from or going to that object. So you can imagine that the American people have a lot of questions about these unidentified objects as well as the broader threat to our national interest.

They are looking to the administration for answers, and the only path forward is full and complete transparency. President Biden needs to explain what happened and just how concerned the

American people should be, and he needs to consult with Congress and share the information he has with us. Until that happens, speculation will only intensify. If you don't know what the cause of a particular concern is or an anxiety or maybe even a threat, it is only human nature to speculate and imagine the very worst. So the last several days have prompted a lot of questions, and I hope the administration will provide some necessary answers soon.

I expect the Chinese spy balloon and these unidentified objects will be the topics of discussion in the Senate this week. I know all of our colleagues, Republican and Democrat alike, are eager to learn more, and I hope the administration will be what it has not yet been, and that is forthright and transparent.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Madam President, on another matter, this last week, President Biden spoke at his State of the Union Address about the looming debt crisis, but instead of a plea for unity and bipartisanship and working together, he turned it into political fearmongering and finger-pointing. He even suggested that Republicans wanted to cut funding for Social Security and Medicare, on which millions upon millions of seniors depend—something that could not be further from the truth. You might call it the Big Lie.

Speaker MCCARTHY is leading debt ceiling discussions for Republicans, and he has been absolutely clear that these programs are not on the chopping block. As the American people witnessed last Tuesday evening, Republicans all agree on this point. Social Security and Medicare are a lifeline for seniors and some of the most vulnerable people in our country, and these programs are not going anywhere, period.

But what the President and our Democratic colleagues have failed to acknowledge is that the status quo is not sustainable, particularly when it comes to Social Security. We are told by the actuaries that unless Congress does something, Social Security and Medicare will become insolvent and incapable of paying the benefits upon which millions of seniors depend.

I have to ask whether the President, by this fearmongering, made it easier or harder for us to work together to meet our responsibilities and to eliminate the threat of insolvency, which we are on a path to if Congress does nothing. Did the President make it more likely that Republicans and Democrats would work together to provide for the solvency and survival of Social Security or Medicare by fearmongering and finger-pointing? I think we all know he did not.

Projections show that Social Security recipients will see a reduction of almost 25 percent in their benefits if nothing changes. So we know we have to do something. Texans who live on a fixed income cannot handle a 25-percent cut. They are already struggling